VIReC RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO VA DATA

| Data Issues Brief | February 2005 |

1. File Date Changed on FY2004 Medical SAS Outpatient Event Dataset

The VHA Office of Information announced that a change of file date for the FY2004 Medical SAS Outpatient Event (SE) Dataset does not reflect any change in the data. Data from the SE file dated 11/18/04 are identical to data from the SE file dated 1/21/05. For the full announcement, see the NPCD Intranet site at http://vaww.aac.va.gov/npcd/new/Default.php.

2. Information Technology Conference 2005 Cancelled

The VA Chief Information Officer has announced cancellation of the 2005 Information Technology conference, scheduled for August 8-11 in Austin, TX. This year's conference will not be held due to budgetary restraints. A copy of the announcement is available on the Intranet at http://vaww.iconferences.aac.va.gov/.

3. Three Workshops Offered on Using Medicare Data

The Research Data Assistance Center (ResDAC), contractor to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), will offer its introductory workshop and two new workshops this spring:
- CMS 101 – Introduction to the use of Medicare data for research, May 16-18, 2005
- CMS 301 – Using SEER/Medicare data for research, May 19, 2005
- CMS 302 – Conducting economic research using Medicare data, May 19, 2005

All workshops are held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN. Full information about the workshops, as well as about ResDAC and its many services, is available on the Internet at http://www.resdac.umn.edu/AboutUs/Index.asp.

4. VIReC Session on Requesting Medicare Data at HSR&D National Meeting

VIReC will host a breakfast session at the HSR&D National Meeting on February 18, 7:00-8:00 a.m. The session will describe the process for requesting Medicare data for veterans from VIReC and will offer ample opportunities for discussion. Information about the National Meeting is available at http://www.hsrd.research.va.gov/about/national_meeting/2005/. Details, such as location, for breakfast sessions will be included in meeting materials distributed at the meeting.

5. 2005 DSS User Conference To Be Held April 5-8

The first face-to-face DSS users conference in four years will be held April 5-8, 2005, in Las Vegas. March 4 is the deadline for both online conference registration and hotel room registration. The target audience for the conference is Network DSS coordinators and all members of medical centers' DSS Site Teams. Research users of DSS data also may find the conference useful. Full information is available on the Intranet at http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/conferences/dss2005/index.cfm.

6. Data Warehouse/Data Marts Newsletter

The January 2005 Quarterly Issue of the *Data Warehouse/Data Marts Newsletter* includes items on VistA data extracts via SQL and on development of metadata for the datamarts. The newsletter is available on the Intranet at http://vaww.va.gov/vhaea/scripts/dwdm.asp

7. New Information on VIReC Web Site

Information posted to the VIReC Web site since January 18, 2005, includes:
- Medical SAS Datasets Frequencies of Select Variables for FY2004
- DSS Frequencies of Select Variables from all years of laboratory (LAB), laboratory test results (LAR), pharmacy (PHA), and radiology (RAD) datasets
- New VA Medicare data for 2002 and additional files

For full information, see the VIReC Web site homepage at http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov/.